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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR VCI/CCA, EUR/RPM  
NSC FOR MIKE HAYES  
JCS FOR J5 NORWOOD  
OSD FOR ISA (PERENYI)

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TAGS: [KCFE](#) [OSCE](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: CFE/JCG: 20 JANUARY PLENARY--RESTATING POSITIONS

REF: STATE 004933

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for Internet.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Joint Consultative Group convened its opening plenary of 2009 on 20 January. In response to the U.S. opening statement, Russia objected strenuously to any wrong-doing on its part and tried to place all responsibility for a way forward on CFE at our doorstep. Russia indignantly insisted it would not "fragment" the parallel actions package by ending its "suspension." It also called again for accelerating the pace of negotiations by meeting more often, supported by dealing with some issues in Vienna. Germany offered a lengthy statement taking stock of finding a way forward. Italy and the U.S. called out Russia on CFE inspection refusals and were supported by a number of Allies.

¶2. (SBU) As is an annual rite, several Allies made brief statements preserving their positions on disputes in the context of the December 2008 data exchange: Spain and the UK over Gibraltar; and Turkey and Greece over certain islands. Also, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia went three rounds with dueling accusations around Azeri concerns about Russian CFE Treaty-limited equipment transshipped through Armenia into Nagorno-Karabakh. Meanwhile, at the first OSCE Permanent Council meeting on January 15, several Allies had expressed support for the CFE Treaty and the parallel action plan as a way out of the impasse, calling on Russia to end its "suspension." All are patiently awaiting next steps from the incoming U.S. team. End Summary.

2008 -- "lost year..."  
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¶3. (SBU) At the 20 January plenary meeting of the Joint Consultative Group (JCG) 2009 winter session, the U.S. (Neighbour) kicked off the meeting with the presentation of the U.S. opening of round statement (text reftel, also see Journal). Allies had welcomed receipt of courtesy copies of the U.S. statement at the JCG-T meeting the day prior. Russia (Ulyanov) responded swiftly and predictably, rejecting all U.S. accusations of non-compliance addressed to Russia in the U.S. statement. Ulyanov claimed that all parties understand the reasons for the crisis: Washington's alleged refusal to implement the Istanbul Commitments, failure to

ratify the a/CFE, and the fact that the U.S. coerced its Allies to support this approach. Further, Russia,s so-called noncompliance with the Treaty is actually required by Russian legislation, and Russia was forced to take this step. There will be no inspections in Russia or Russian data provided until a solution is found to this problem. Russia indignantly insisted it would not "break apart" the parallel actions package by ending its "suspension." Ulyanov also called again for accelerating the pace of bilateral talks on the parallel package by meeting more often supported by negotiating some issues in Vienna.

14. (SBU) Ulyanov continued that the U.S. seems to be committed to the CFE Treaty based on its words, a positive signal. Russia intends to cooperate actively to restore vitality to the Treaty. It is premature to bury the Treaty. There is serious and active work to do - it is not sufficient to imitate such efforts with words only. 2008 was lost to this cause thanks to the U.S. Russia calls on all, especially the U.S. partner, to engage in real work. Russia hopes the passive nature of 2008 dialogue is overcome - if all are successful, it could lead to restoring the full Treaty.

15. (SBU) Germany (Richter) began its statement by highlighting the first meeting of 2009 as an opportunity to take stock and mull over the key elements of: cooperation, predictability, confidence and stability. We cannot overlook the security concerns of others, we need to take into account the practical concerns. There is a need for discretion on when to hold back, avoid new arms races, especially close to

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borders. Only comprehensive cooperation between states can cope with massive changes since the end of the Cold War, including the enlargement of NATO. At the beginning of 2009 - reality is sobering given the positions just heard from the U.S. and Russia. Ten years after the significant signature of the a/CFE it is still not in force.

16. (SBU) Germany is concerned about the ongoing impasse and crisis in the JCG, and agreed with Russia that 2008 was a "lost" year. Germany acknowledges the need for a new beginning in arms control to counter future erosion of European security architecture. It will play its part by hosting high-ranking experts in early summer per Foreign Minister Steinmeier,s pending invitation. Germany believes events in Georgia last year showed us that conflicts with conventional equipment are not a thing of the past. We need to build on the agreements we have. 2009 could be a historic year of decisions. Conventional arms control needs the priority it deserves. Without the Steinmeier meeting, there is a risk the crisis will be ongoing. Germany will try to come up with something constructive on the basis of the parallel action package. Germany also hopes the JCG can play a role in such dialogue. (See Journal)

Compliance: 2009 Inspection refusals begin  
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17. (SBU) Italy announced that its notified CFE inspection in Russia on 13 January was refused by Russia on 7 January. Italy remains convinced of the fundamental importance of CFE, and urged Russia to accept inspections in the spirit of cooperation. (See Journal) The U.S. supported Italy,s announcement, and followed with a similar statement of our own concerning Russia,s refusal on 8 January of our inspection planned for 12 January. (See Journal) Romania led a chorus of Allies (Turkey, UK, France, Netherlands, and Portugal) in support of the Italian and U.S. statements, expressing concern with Russia,s continued non-compliance with the Treaty.

18. (SBU) Ulyanov disingenuously admitted having difficulty in working with NATO colleagues on this and a whole host of other issues. If NATO states endorse the parallel actions

package, then object to refused inspections, that would not be in line with reality. How can NATO states insist that Russia accept inspections when that is not consistent with the parallel actions package? Russia understands that it should resume receiving inspections only after the package has been mutually agreed. NATO should work out a clear position and stick with it.

¶9. (SBU) The UK (Gare) and U.S. (Neighbour) swiftly countered that reaching agreement on the package is certainly not a precondition to Russia's receiving inspections. Further, if Russia returned to compliance it would greatly help on many issues. Neighbour added that Russia had exacerbated the impasse though its unilateral "suspension," a step which made everything harder and had wide-ranging negative ramifications.

¶10. (SBU) Seeking the last word, Ulyanov again said Russia is against any attempts to "fragment" the package. There are no grounds for Russia to resume inspections since none of the reasons that caused its suspension in the first place have been addressed yet. The only path to resumption runs through dialogue and willingness to compromise. Russia understands if partners are not yet ready. Russia will wait - when the time is right we will begin the negotiating process. Russia will be gratified when the U.S. grasps the fact that it all hinges on U.S. readiness to engage.

¶11. (SBU) Comment: The Russian rhetoric at this opening meeting was familiar, and there were no new substantive elements raised. Russia continues to place all responsibility for a way forward at our doorstep. At the January 19 JCG-T, USDe1 had briefed Allies verbally on the results of the December A/S Fried and Russia MFA Antonov meeting, noting further discussion was expected in January on

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when the next bilateral would take place. Allied support for active engagement on the basis of the parallel actions package remains high, and continued on the eve of the new Administration. Clearly, all are patiently awaiting next steps from the incoming team. End Comment.

#### Proverbial Data Exchange Statements

¶12. (SBU) Spain and the UK exchanged statements, as has been done in previous years, regarding information the UK reports on its equipment located in Gibraltar. Spain emphasized that it has not altered its position since 1992 on the status of the dispute over control of the territory. The UK recalled that neither had its position changed as previously noted, and that information on its forces in Gibraltar was submitted per CFE Treaty data exchange obligations. (see Journal for both statements).

¶13. (SBU) Turkey also made a statement regarding the practice of Greece, since the signing of the Treaty, to include information in its data exchange for its military forces present on certain islands. Turkey considers this a breach of Greece's obligation to demilitarize such islands. Implementation of CFE data exchange requirements does not prejudice the obligations of other agreements according to the a/CFE Treaty signed on 15 November 1999. (See Journal)

¶14. (SBU) Greece replied by saying the Turkish statement introduces again a well known issue that has no basis in international law. The Turkish comments have no relevance to present discussion. Greece has repeatedly replied to the Turkish statement previously in the JCG and other places. Greece implements all its obligations and encourages all others to do the same. (See Journal)

Azeri-Armenia-Russia round robin

¶15. (SBU) Azerbaijan made a lengthy statement regarding a chart disseminated through the media on a large number of weapons and ammunition shipped by Russia through Armenia into N-K. Azerbaijan distributed an unclassified document to OSCE delegations describing the issue and with the chart in English and Russian (see SEC.DEL/14/09 and 14/09/Add 1 of 16 January). In this JCG meeting, Azerbaijan focused its remarks on the numbers of CFE Treaty-limited types of equipment with respect to CFE data exchange information provided in December 2008, including battle tanks, armored combat vehicles (ACVs), and artillery over 100 mm.

¶16. (SBU) Armenia disputed the authenticity of the document in question and denied any wrong-doing claiming this was yet another propaganda stunt by Armenia to unsettle the Minsk Group peace process. Russia also challenged the validity of the document and claimed no wrong-doing. (see Journal for Azeri and Armenian statements). Septel will report fuller details on this exchange.

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